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C O N F I D E N T I A L KATHMANDU 000313

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DEPT FOR SA/INS
NSC FOR MILLARD AND RICHELSON

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [NP](#)
SUBJECT: PARTY LEADER DISCUSSES MEDIATION

Classified By: Ambassador James F. Moriarty. Reasons 1.4 (b/d).

Reconciliation of Legitimate Forces Needed First

11. (C) On January 27, Ram Sharan Mahat, Joint General Secretary of the Nepali Congress (NC) Party, told the

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Ambassador that the involvement of a third party was needed for the King and the Parties and the Maoists to come together. Mahat stated that the Parties were ready for dialogue with the Palace, but "even GP" Koirala, Nepali Congress President and head of the seven-party alliance, was not in the position to make a gesture to the King. Mahat claimed the Maoists were also looking for a face-saving way out, though he admitted he had not personally met with them. The Ambassador doubted Maoist sincerity, pointing out that before February 1, 2005, the Parties and the Palace were on the same side and the Maoists had refused to come to the negotiating table. Now that the Parties and the Palace were split, and the political system was on the verge of crumbling, why would the Maoists feel a need to compromise? The Ambassador stressed that reconciliation between the Parties and the Palace was needed before the Maoists would negotiate in good faith. The Ambassador asserted that mediation could be appropriate if the King and Parties were willing and ready. However, the King had given no sign that he wanted to reconcile with the Parties. The Ambassador emphasized that if the King reached out in apparent good faith, he hoped that the Parties would be willing to reciprocate. It would be at this point, the Ambassador underscored, that mediation could play an important role.

Indian Support of Mediation Key

12. (C) Mahat stated that someone with "moral authority" was needed to mediate. He suggested that possible mediators could include United Nation officials or prominent individuals, such as Former President Carter. (Note: Mahat participated in the October 2005 Carter Center-sponsored training for Nepali politicians in the United States. End note.) The Ambassador noted that Indian support would be needed for any successful negotiation, and cautioned that

India was not keen on the United Nations, and had also expressed doubts about other mediators. Mahat agreed that Indian support was crucial, and suggested that an Indian could even play the role of mediator. However, the Ambassador commented that Nepalis did not view Indians as neutral in Nepal, which might make it difficult for an Indian to become the mediator.

Parties Don't Want to Strengthen King by Condemning Maoists

13. (C) Mahat explained that NC was going ahead with its peaceful "agitation plan" against the King's proposed municipal election. He admitted that Party members were following Maoist statements and actions about using violence to disturb the elections closely and with concern at an individual level. However, the Party collectively had not discussed the Maoists recently, as the government was not giving Parties "any space." He commented that the Parties did not want to strengthen the King's hand by condemning the Maoists. He pointed out that the government was still holding his younger brother (Prakash Sharan Mahat, NC(D) leader and former Minister of State for Foreign Affairs) and other politicians in jail. Mahat said that the mood of the people was against the monarchy, noting that audience members had booed him recently in a gathering in Kathmandu when he mentioned that the future of the monarchy would be decided by a Parliament or constituent assembly. He added that, while the people feared the Maoists, they did not support the Maoists. Highlighting statements he had personally made against Maoist violence, and stressing that NC leader GP Koirala was a "staunch anti-Communist," Mahat held that the Parties would "expose" the Maoists' violent intentions "at the negotiating table." The Ambassador urged the Parties to condemn Maoist violence when it occurred.

Comment

14. (C) While we support anything that would lead to a breakthrough, we see no sign of movement by the King that would give space to a third party to mediate. Without the King's support, and the reconciliation of legitimate democratic forces, it is difficult to see how mediation alone could convince the Maoists to give up violence.
MORIARTY